

Message Text

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ACTION IO-14

INFO OCT-01 ARA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-08 INR-10
LAB-04 NSAE-00 SIL-01 L-03 AF-10 EA-10 EUR-12
NEA-11 /094 W
-----026272 010803Z /11
R 311912Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2496
INFO USMISSION GENEVA

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: ELAB, ILO, TD
SUBJECT: TRINIDAD AND 1978 ILO CONFERENCE

REF: STATE 127537

1. LABOFF GAVE SUBSTANCE OF PARA 5 OF REFTEL TO FRANCIS CORBIE, PERMSEC IN MINISTRY OF LABOR, DIANA MAHABIR OF EMPLOYERS' CONSULTATIVE ASSOCIATION, AND TREVOR HAMILTON, FIRST VP OF PUBLIC SERVICES ASSOCIATION. HAMILTON UNDERTOOK TO BRIEF OTHER UNION REPS ON US VIEWS. ALL EXPRESSED APPRECIATION FOR CURRENT INFORMATION ON USG POSITION VIS-A-VIS ILO. HOWEVER, ONLY DIANA MAHABIR OFFERED ANY SUBSTANTIVE COMMENT, STATING THAT WITHOUT US PARTICIPATION HER JOB AS COMMITTEE VICE-CHAIRPERSON WOULD BE MADE MORE DIFFICULT SINCE THE US FORMERLY HAD PLAYED AN ACTIVE AND CONSTRUCTIVE ROLE IN HER COMMITTEE. SHE ALSO EXPRESSED FEARS THAT TRIPARTISM WOULD BE ERODED FURTHER AND THE ILO'S EFFORTS IN PROMOTING HUMAN RIGHTS WOULD LAG WITHOUT THE IMPETUS THE US HAD PROVIDED IN THESE AREAS IN THE PAST.

2. WHILE WE HAVE MADE NO ATTEMPTS TO ELICIT COMMENTS FROM INTERESTED TRINIDADIAN ON THE US WITHDRAWAL FROM ILO OR
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ON THE PROS AND CONS OF REENTERING, WE HAVE BEEN STRUCK BY THE ABSENCE OF ANY SIGNIFICANT REACTION HERE TO THE US MOVES. A FEW GOTT CONTACTS, SUCH AS FRANCIS CORBIE, HAVE INDICATED CAUTIOUSLY THAT, IN PRINCIPLE AT LEAST, RENEWED US PARTICIPATION IN ILO WOULD BE DESIRABLE. THOSE TRADE UNIONISTS WITH CLOSE TIES TO THE GOTT HAVE BEEN EQUALLY TIGHT-LIPPED ON THE SUBJECT. IT APPEARS, THEREFORE,

EITHER THAT THE GOVERNMENT DOES NOT HAVE A POSITION ON THE US-ILO QUESTION OR, AS IT OFTEN DOES ON ISSUES WHICH DO NOT APPEAR TO EFFECT ITS VITAL INTERESTS DIRECTLY, THAT IT HAS CONSCIOUSLY DECIDED TO SIT ON THE FENCE. BE THAT AS IT MAY AND ASIDE FROM DIANA MAHABIR'S COMMENTS REPORTED ABOVE, ONLY GEORGE WEEKES OF THE OILFIELDS WORKERS' TRADE UNION HAS COME OUT STRONGLY ON THE QUESTION, BOTH PUBLICLY AND IN PRIVATE -- HE FAVORS US PARTICIPATION IN ILO.

3. AS THINGS STAND NOW, THE FOLLOWING ARE SCHEDULED TO BE THE T&T PARTICIPANTS AT THE ILO JUNE CONFERENCE: SENATOR DESMOND CARTEY, MINISTRY OF LABOR; FRANCIS CORBIE, PERMSEC, MIN LAB; MRS. ANNELLE HUTCHINSON, LABOR OFFICER, MIN LAB; JOSEPH GRANNUM, T&T LABOR ATTACHE IN LONDON; SENATOR JAMES MANSWELL, PRESIDENT, T&T LABOR CONGRESS; SENATOR NATHANIEL CRITCHLOW, PRESIDENT, NATIONAL UNION OF GOVERNMENT AND FEDERATED WORKERS; VERNON GLEAN, PRESIDENT, SEAMEN AND WATERFRONT WORKERS' TRADE UNION (SWWTU); RALPH CHARLES, FIRST VP, SWWTU; TREVOR HAMILTON, FIRST VP PUBLIC SERVICES ASSOCIATION (PSA); LANCELOT CLARKE, DEP GEN SEC, PSA; DIANA MAHABIR, MANAGING DIRECTOR, EMPLOYERS' CONSULTATIVE ASSOCIATION; AND JOHN HORSHAM, CONTROLLER OF ADMINISTRATION, FEDERATION CHEMICALS LTD.FOX

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: WITHDRAWAL OF MEMBERSHIP, GOVERNMENT REACTIONS, INTERNATIONAL LABOR ORGANIZATIONS, MEETINGS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 31 may 1978
Decaption Date: 20 Mar 2014
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978PORTO01653
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780228-1224
Format: TEL
From: PORT OF SPAIN
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t1978053/aaaaacaj.tel
Line Count: 85
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 86984698-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION IO
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: ONLY
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: ONLY
Reference: 78 STATE 127537
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 05 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: N/A
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2605518
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: TRINIDAD AND 1978 ILO CONFERENCE
TAGS: ELAB, TD, US, ILO
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/86984698-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014